



2008 Voices for Action Poverty Summit Overview

"I thought it was amazing how people from all over Michigan came together as one big community to try to figure out ways to make a difference in these hard times."

"As people spoke, you could hear the passion in their voices about the difference they have made and want to continue to make."

"...every meeting you attended made you feel as though you're not just there attending another meeting for another cause; but you felt as though you were part of a movement, a movement that was bound for success."

"I believe the most vital piece was empowering people, helping them to form networks with others passionate about the same issue and giving them hope that change is possible. For me, this process is what the Summit is all about."

- 2008 Voices for Action Poverty Summit Participants

On Nov. 13, 2008, Michigan Department of Human Services partnered with Governor Granholm's Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity and Michigan Community Action Agency Association to become the Voices for Action Network. Together, they sponsored the statewide summit on poverty. With 5,182 people registering to attend, the 2008 Voices for Action Poverty Summit exceeded expectations. This document summarizes the way identified outcomes for the summit were met. More striking, however, was the intangible sense of shared experience among so many of us who took part in the summit; the feeling that the paradigm of how government and citizens relate to each other is shifting. "I never thought state government could do something like this," was a comment heard frequently on summit-day. This demonstrates how we now have an unprecedented opportunity to continue to re-frame perceptions of state government as the leading advocate for the poor and vulnerable.

Summit Outcomes

Overall, 736 evaluation responses indicate that the summit was a positive experience. On a scale of 1-4, with 4 being the highest level of satisfaction, the overall quality of the summit scored 3.4. Governor Jennifer Granholm was rated highest among the speakers, scoring a 3.7; speaker ratings overall averaged 3.5.

More than 5,000 Energized Participants

- This is the largest state summit on poverty in at least 40 years.
- The largest group represented at the summit was consumers – low-income individuals – making up 15.5 percent of the participants. Low-income persons participated in significant numbers in every best practice session and each regional breakout session. Many of these participants continued the energy on the bus ride home. Participants paired up to discuss and support each other in meeting immediate goals like going back to school or sharing transportation.
- Michigan is the only state that has included low-income participation on this scale.
- High school, undergraduate and graduate students made up another significant percentage of participants at the summit.

\$300,000 in Private Investment to Support Poverty Reduction

- Twenty-two foundations, businesses, universities and private organizations made financial contributions to support the summit.
- About \$36,000 was realized directly from registrations and exhibitor fees.
- Another \$1,829 was raised from individual contributions.

State Government Involvement

Twelve leaders from nine state departments moderated best practice sessions. The level of interagency and interdepartmental involvement in the poverty summit was truly exceptional; no other state poverty summit has approached this level collaboration. State departments and agencies represented include:

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority.
- Michigan Department of Corrections.
- Michigan Department of Education.
- Michigan Department of Labor, Energy and Economic Growth.
- Governor's Office of Community & Faith-based Initiatives
- Michigan Department of Community Health.
- Michigan Department of Civil Rights.
- Michigan Office of Services to the Aging.

Other key statewide groups that moderated best practices sessions included Michigan's Early Childhood Investment Corporation, Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative and Council of Michigan Foundations.

Voices for Action Regional Network Launched

- Eight regional breakout sessions provided participants with regional data, information on regional networking, and poverty reduction projects already under way in their communities. Most important, the regional breakouts provided a forum for 5,000 people to discuss issues related to poverty in the context of their own communities.
- Each of the regions completed a preliminary 100-day plan indicating how engagement of key stakeholders, especially low-income persons, will continue after the summit.
- Each participant in the regional breakout sessions worked in small discussion groups to answer the following questions:
 - What are you aware of that is working to reduce poverty?

- What more can be done to reduce poverty in our area?
 - What can each of us personally do to reduce poverty in our area?
- Each participant made a commitment to what they could do, no matter where they were located or their socioeconomic status. This highlighted the emphasis on community, reframing the role of government and the notion that poverty reduction will require all of us to do our part.
- Participants completed surveys in order to identify poverty reduction priorities for their regions.

The table below provides a breakdown of the top three identified priorities by region.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Regional Make-up</i>	<i>Top 3 Regional Priorities</i>
Region 1	Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon and Schoolcraft counties (Upper Peninsula).	1) Job Creation. 2) Increase Access to Health Care Including Behavioral Health. 3) Empower Communities/Support Innovative Local Initiatives.
Region 2	Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Oscoda, Ogemaw, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon and Wexford counties.	1) Job Creation. 2) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education. 3) Link Services for Families to Schools.
Region 3	Kent, Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana and Ottawa counties.	1) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education. 2) Job Creation. 3) Reduce Homelessness and Increase Housing Security.
Region 4	Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, Osceola and Saginaw counties.	1) Job Creation. 2) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education. 2) Reform Public Assistance Programs. 3) Reduce Homelessness and Increase Housing Security.
Region 5	Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, St. Clair, Sanilac and Tuscola counties.	1) Job Creation. 2) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education. 3) Reduce Homelessness and Increase Housing Security.
Region 6	Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren counties.	1) Job Creation. T2) Increase Access to Health Care Including Behavioral Health. T2) Literacy/Adult Education. T2) Reduce Homelessness and Increase Housing

		Security. 3) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education.
Region 7	Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Shiawassee and Washtenaw counties.	1) Job Creation. 2) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education. 3) Reform Public Assistance Programs.
Region 8	City of Detroit, Wayne, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland counties.	1) Expand Access to Early Childhood Education. 2) Job Creation. 3) Link Services for Families to Schools.

Next Steps

- In October 2008, prior to the summit, each region was provided with a \$6,000 planning grant. The planning grant was provided to support the beginning phases of creating a regional structure and a 100-day plan.
- The final 100-day plans are due at the end of January 2009 and will incorporate the input from summit participants and strategies for ongoing engagement.
- An additional \$50,000 implementation grant will be provided to the regions once the 100-day plans are received and approved by the Regional Network Leadership Team.
- Regions will begin to implement their plans in February 2009.
- Technical assistance will be provided to the regions by members of the Kalamazoo Poverty Reduction Initiative and the Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI). The Kalamazoo PRI an established model of community collaboration for reducing poverty in western Michigan. The Traverse Bay PRI is an established model of community collaboration for reducing poverty in northern Michigan.
- Regions will receive administrative guidance from DHS central office staff and the Regional Network Leadership Team which is currently being formed.
- At a state level, efforts will continue to link current poverty reduction initiatives with the regional structure.
- Interagency collaboration and engagement will also continue to be a top priority.
- A robust evaluation component will accompany the various phases of planning and implementation.
- Efforts will continue to involve consumers and students in the ongoing poverty reduction work.
- Leveraging resources and working with the regions to identify funding opportunities within their communities will take on a critical focus moving forward.